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Levin, Stabenow Announce Over \$21 Million for Michigan's Bioterrorism Preparedness

WASHINGTON – Sens. Carl Levin, D-Mich., and Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., announced today that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) approved the majority of Michigan's comprehensive plan to build a stronger health system and to better prepare for bioterrorism. The Department released funding of \$21,623,094 in order to implement the plan. According to HHS, the approval marks the first time that federal, state, and local governments have created a unified plan for responding to public health emergencies resulting from terrorism.

"It is vital that we fund and develop a comprehensive and coordinated system for preparedness," said Levin. "Now Michigan can translate these dollars into meaningful protections for the people of our state."

"Last September's terrorist attacks highlighted for all of us the need to do everything we can to assure that people in Michigan are safe from harm. Improving the readiness of our public health and emergency response systems is a crucial task, and one that is a top priority," Stabenow said. "Today's announcement shows that when federal, state, and local governments work together to protect people in Michigan, great progress can be made."

HHS announced that, in addition to developing a comprehensive bioterrorism plan, state and local governments will use the funds to upgrade infectious disease surveillance and investigation, enhance the readiness of hospitals systems, expand public health laboratory and communications capacities, and improve connectivity between hospitals and city, local, and state health departments to enhance disease reporting.

The Senate recently passed landmark bioterrorism legislation, cosponsored by Levin and Stabenow, granting additional authority to the Secretary of Health and Human Services concerning bioterrorism preparedness and responding to public health emergencies. The bill requires the Secretary to develop and implement a plan with specific criteria for measurements of the progress made at the national, state, and local levels toward achieving the national goal of bioterrorism preparedness.